

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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P R 301821Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9257
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 6064

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: SIXTO DURAN DETERMINED TO SEE ELECTORAL PROCESS
THROUGH

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN'S
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS REGARDING HIS INTENTION TO
REMAIN IN THE RACE TO THE END PROBABLY HAVE DIMINISHED, BUT
NOT STOPPED, PLOTTING AMONG CIVILIANS AND MILITARY TO DISCREDIT
THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

2. SIXTO DURAN, NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FRONT PRESIDENTIAL
CANDIDATE AND PROBABLE SECOND ROUND OPPONENT OF JAIME ROLDOS,
APPEARED ON A TELEVEISED INTERVIEW ON QUITO CHANNEL 8 ON
AUGUST 28. DURING THE INTERVIEW DURAN, WHO HAS BEEN ON
VACATION FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS, REAFFIRMED STRONGLY HIS
INTENTION TO CONTINUE AS CANDIDATE AND TO PRESS THE SECOND
ROUND CAMPAIGN. HE NOTED THAT HE BELIEVES THAT, IN ANY EVENT,
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THE ELECTORAL LAW DOES NOT PERMIT HIM TO RESIGN. HE
DISCOUNTED RUMORS OF PLOTS TO PREVENT THE SECOND ROUND
FROM TAKING PLACE AND ASCRIBED THEM TO POLITICIANS BITTER
OVER THEIR FIRST ROUND DEFEAT. ADDING TO THAT COMMENT,
HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT POSSIBLE FOR RAUL CLEMENTE
HUERTA TO OVERCOME HIS LEAD, WITH THE OFFICIAL COUNT FOR
HALF THE COUNTRY NOW COMPLETE, AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE

THAT HE WOULD BE THE FINALIST ALONG WITH ROLDOS.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF NULLIFICATIONS, DURAN SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WERE SUFFICIENT GROUNDS TO ANNUL THE ENTIRE VOTE FROM COTOPAXI PROVINCE. HE ADDED THAT THE DECISION TO HOLD NEW ELECTIONS THERE ON SEPTEMBER 17 WILL JUST COMPOUND THAT ERROR. THE RESULT WILL BE A PREVIEW OF THE SECOND ROUND. HE EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT PUBLIC DISCONTENT WITH THE SUPREME ELECTORAL-TRIBUNAL AND THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT THE SET IS TRYING TO DIMINISH OR TAKE AWAY ROLDOS' FIRST ROUND MARGIN WILL RESULT IN A BACKLASH IN THE COTOPAXI RE-VOTE, RESULTING IN AN EVEN GREATER MARGIN OF VICTORY FOR ROLDOS THERE, FURTHER COMPLICATING HIS (DURAN'S) PROBLEMS IN THE SECOND ROUND.

4. DURAN-BALLEN'S POSITION ON REMAINING IN THE RACE WAS CONFIRMED IN PRINT WITH A STATEMENT BY HIM APPEARING IN PRO-SIXTO EL TIEMPO ON AUGUST 30. DURAN-BALLEN STATED, ACCORDING TO THE PAPER, THAT HE HAD NO REASON TO WITHDRAW AND DEFRAUD THE 400,000 VOTERS WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM ON JULY 16. EL TIEMPO COMMENTED THAT DURAN MADE THE STATEMENT TO PUT AN END TO A SERIES OF RUMORS ABOUT HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RACE.

5. POLCOUNS TALKED WITH CONSERVATIVE PARTY FIGURE RODRIGO SUAREZ ON AUGUST 30 ABOUT DURAN-BALLEN'S CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENT. SUAREZ AID THAT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FRONT MEMBERS MET ON AUGUST 29 TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE WITH SIXTO. SIXTO STOLE MOST OF THEIR THUNDER BY ANNOUNCING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING THAT HE INTENDED TO CARRY ON TILL THE END. A COUPLE OF INDIVIDUALS, MOST PROMINENTLY CONSERVATIVE PARTY HEAD RAFAEL ARMIJOS, SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF RESIGNING, BUT SIXTO WAS ADAMANT IN HIS DECISION TO PURSUE HIS CANDIDACY WITH ALL HIS EFFORT. SUAREZ SAID THAT THOSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING OVERWHELMINGLY AGREED THAT THAT WAS THE ONLY HONORABLE COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE FRONT TO TAKE. SUAREZ REMARKED THAT WHILE ARMIJOS, OTTO AROSEMENA AND SOME OTHERS MIGHT TRY TO UNDERMINE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, THE CONSENSUS OF THE NCF WAS SOLIDLY WITH SIXTO AND THE STRAIGHT ROAD.

6. COMMENT: DURAN'S RESIGNATION, ALONG WITH THAT OF HUERTA, IS AN INTERGRAL PART OF ANY PLAN TO DISCREDIT THE RETORNO PROCESS. WITHOUT IT THE EFFORTS OF THOSE OPPOSED TO THE PROCESS ARE LESS LIKELY TO ACHIEVE FRUITION. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIS RESIGNATION IS NOT ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE TO SUCH PLANS AND THOUGH HIS STRONG

ASSURANCE THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO RUN MIGHT SLOW DOWN THE PLOTTERS, IT PROBABLY WILL NOT DISSUADE THEM. WHAT COULD BE VERY CRUCIAL, HOWEVER, IS SIXTO'S CONDUCT AND PUBLIC POSITION DURING THE NEXT WEEK WHEN THE CONSPIRATORS ARE EXPECTED TO DO THEIR BEST TO DISCREDIT THE ELECTORAL PROCEDURES AND SHORT-CIRCUIT THE RETORNO PLAN. SHOULD SIXTO FORTHRIGHTLY PRONOUNCE HIS FAITH IN THE PROCESS DURING THIS PERIOD, HE COULD UNDERCUT THE CONSPIRACY WHICH DEPENDS ON CREATING A WAVE OF PUBLIC ANTIPATHY TOWARD THE PROCESS. SHOULD HE REMAIN SILENT, THE CHANCES OF DERAILING THE PROCESS WILL BE IMPROVED.
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